

Chapter 1
(Part 2): Sets
and Relations

Dr. Hamza
MOUFEK

Sets

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Chapter 1 (Part 2): Sets and Relations

Hamza MOUFEK

Algebra 1

October 2025



Outlines of this talk

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Definition

A set is a collection of objects called elements or members of the set.

- If x is a member of the set A , we write :

$$x \in A,$$

and if x is a not member of the set A , we write

$$x \notin A.$$

- The **empty set** is the set that contains no elements. It is denoted by \emptyset or $\{\}$
- Two sets are **equal** if they have exactly the same elements. In other words,

$$\mathbf{A = B} \iff (\mathbf{x \in A} \iff \mathbf{x \in B})$$

(that is, have exactly the same elements)

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Examples

- the students in this classroom
- the points in a straight line
- $\{a, b, c\}$
- the set of Even numbers up to 50.

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In set theory there are several description methods:

Listing :the set is described by listing all its elements

Example: $\{a, e, i, o, u\}$

Abstraction: the set is described through a property of its elements

Example: $A = \{x | \text{is a vowel of the Latin alphabet}\}$

Another way to describe a set is to use predicate :

$$A = \{x | P(x)\}$$

This notation is also known as **set-builder** notation.

Examples

- $\{x \in \mathbb{R} \mid |x - 2| < 1\},$
- $\{z \in \mathbb{C} \mid z^5 = 1\},$
- $\{x \in \mathbb{R} \mid 0 \leq x \leq 1\} = [0, 1]$
- $\{x \in \mathbb{R} \mid x^2 + 3x + 2 = 0\} = \{-1, -2\}$

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Venn Diagrams: graphical representation that supports the formal description

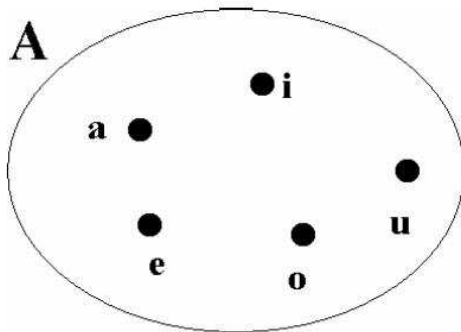


Figure: Venn diagram

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Sets of Numbers

■ $\mathbb{N} = \mathbb{Z}^+ = \text{natural numbers} = \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4, \dots\}$

■ $\mathbb{Z} = \text{integers} = \{\dots, -5, -4, -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, \dots\}$

■ $\mathbb{Q} = \text{rational numbers} = \{\frac{m}{n} | m, n \in \mathbb{Z}, n \neq 0\}$

■ $\mathbb{R} = \text{real numbers}$

■ $\mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{Q} = \text{irrational numbers}$

■ $\mathbb{C} = \text{complex numbers} = \{x + iy | x, y \in \mathbb{R}, \text{ where } i = \sqrt{-1}\}$

Cardinality

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Definition

The Cardinality $|\mathbf{A}|$ of a set \mathbf{A} is the number of distinct elements of \mathbf{A} . If $|\mathbf{A}|$ is finite, then \mathbf{A} is said to be finite. Otherwise, \mathbf{A} is said to be infinite.

Examples

- $|\emptyset| = 0$ while $|\{\emptyset\}| = 1$
- $|\{1, 2, 5\}| = 3$
- The set of prime numbers is infinite.

Definition

- We say that a set **A** is a subset of a set **B**, and we write $\mathbf{A} \subseteq \mathbf{B}$, if every element of **A** is an element of **B**.

$$\mathbf{A} \subseteq \mathbf{B} \iff \forall \mathbf{x}, (\mathbf{x} \in \mathbf{A} \implies \mathbf{x} \in \mathbf{B})$$

- Sets **A**, **B** are equal, written $\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{B}$, if they have exactly the same elements. Equivalently:

$$\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{B} \iff \mathbf{A} \subseteq \mathbf{B} \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{B} \subseteq \mathbf{A}$$

- **A** is a proper subset of **B** if it is a subset which is not equal. This can be written

$$\mathbf{A} \subsetneq \mathbf{B}$$

subsets

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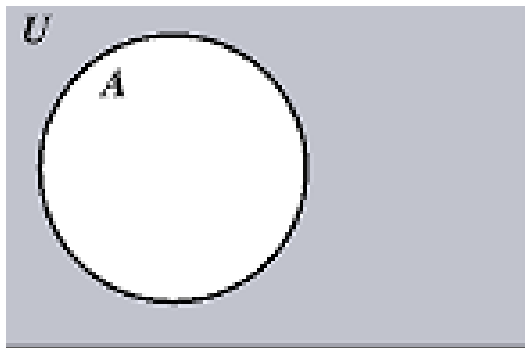


Figure: $A \subset B$

subsets

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Examples:

$$\blacksquare \{x \in \mathbb{R} | x^2 - 1 = 0\} \subset \{y \in \mathbb{R} | y^2 \in \mathbb{N}\}$$

$$\blacksquare \mathbb{N} \subset \mathbb{Z} \subset \mathbb{Q} \subset \mathbb{R} \subset \mathbb{C}$$

$$\blacksquare 4\mathbb{Z} \subset 2\mathbb{Z}$$

remark

We have then

$$\mathbf{A} \not\subseteq \mathbf{B} \Leftrightarrow \exists \mathbf{x} | \mathbf{x} \in \mathbf{A} \wedge \mathbf{x} \notin \mathbf{B}$$

Examples:

Let $A = \{1, 2, 3\}$ and $B = \{1, 2, 5\}$. Then $A \not\subseteq B$ because $\exists 3 \in A$ and $3 \notin B$.

Here we collect several results relating to subsets.

Theorem

-1 If $|A| = 0$, then $A = \emptyset$.

-2 For any set A , we have $\emptyset \subset A$ and $A \subseteq A$

-3 If $A \subseteq B$ and $B \subseteq C$, then $A \subseteq C$

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Definition

- Let $A \subset U$ be a set. The complement of A is the set

$$A^C = \{x \in U : x \notin A\}.$$

This can also be written $U \setminus A$, $U - A$, or \overline{A} .

- If $B \subset U$ is some other set, then the complement of A relative B is

$$B \setminus A = \{x \in B, x \notin A\}$$

- The union of A and B is the set

$$A \cup B = \{x \in U : x \in A \vee x \in B\}.$$

- The intersection of A and B is the set

$$A \cap B = \{x \in U : x \in A \wedge x \in B\}.$$

- We say that A and B are disjoint if $A \cap B = \emptyset$.

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Let A and B be sets:

- The **union** of A and B is the set $A \cup B = \{x : x \in A \cup x \in B\}$.

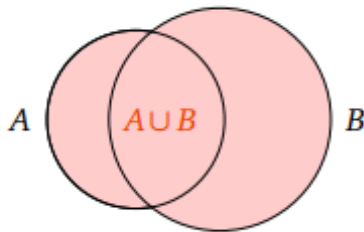


Figure: $A \cup B$

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- The **intersection** of A and B is the set $A \cap B = \{x : x \in A \cap x \in B\}$.

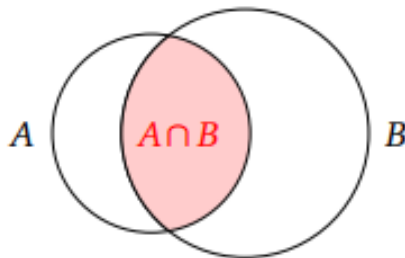


Figure: $A \cap B$

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- The **difference** of A and B is the set $A - B = \{x : x \in A \cap x \notin B\}$



Figure: $A - B$

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- The **symmetric difference** of A and B is the set $A \Delta B = (A - B) \cup (B - A)$

Note that $A - B$ is, in general, not equal to $B - A$

- The **complement** of A is the set $\bar{A} = \{x : x \notin A\} = E - A$

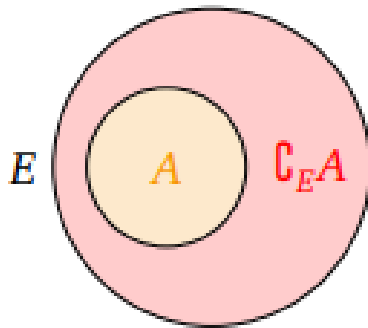


Figure: A^C

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Calculation Rules

Let A, B, C be set .Then :

- 1 $\emptyset \cup A = A$ and $\emptyset \cap A = \emptyset$ (**Identity**)
- 2 $A \cap B \subseteq A \subseteq A \cup B$
- 3 $A \cap B = B \cap A$ and $A \cup B = B \cup A$ (**Commutative properties**)
- 4 $A \cap (B \cap C) = (A \cap B) \cap C$ (**Associative properties**)
- 5 $A \cup (B \cup C) = (A \cup B) \cup C$ (**Associative properties**)
- 6 $A \cup A = A \cap A = A$
- 7 $A \subseteq B \Rightarrow A \cup C \subseteq B \cup C$ and $A \cap C \subseteq B \cap C$.
- 8 $A \cup (B \cap C) = (A \cup B) \cap (A \cup C)$ (**Distributive properties**)
- 9 $A \cap (B \cup C) = (A \cap B) \cup (A \cap C)$ (**Distributive properties**)
- 10 $\overline{(A \cup B)} = \bar{A} \cap \bar{B}$ and $\overline{(A \cap B)} = \bar{A} \cup \bar{B}$ (**Morgan's Laws**) ,
- 11 $\forall A, B \in \mathcal{P}(E), A \subseteq B \Rightarrow \bar{B} \subseteq \bar{A}$

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Here are the drawings for the last assertion.

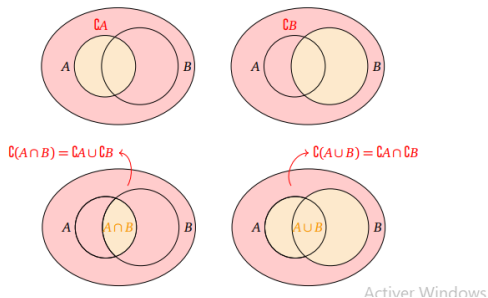


Figure: Morgan's laws

Cartesian Product

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- Given two sets A and B , we define the Cartesian product of A and B as the set of ordered couples (a, b) where $a \in A$ and $b \in B$; formally,

$$A \times B = \{(a, b) : a \in A \text{ and } b \in B\}$$

- Notice that: $A \times B \neq B \times A$
- we have $(a, b) = (c, d) \Leftrightarrow a = c \wedge b = d$

Examples

- $A = \{1, 2\}$ and $B = \{1, 2, 5\}$
 $A \times B = \{(1, 1), (1, 2), (1, 5), (2, 1), (2, 2), (2, 5)\}$
 $B \times A = \{(1, 1), (1, 2), (2, 1), (2, 2), (5, 1), (5, 2)\}$
- $\{1, 2, 7\}$ and $B = \{\emptyset, \{1, 5\}\}$
 $A \times B = \{(1, \emptyset), (1, \{1, 5\}), (2, \emptyset), (2, \{1, 5\}), (7, \emptyset), (7, \{1, 5\})\}$
- The Cartesian product $\mathbb{R}^2 = \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}$ is called the Cartesian plane.

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- The Cartesian product can be computed on any number n of sets A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n . $A_1 \times A_2 \times \dots \times A_n$ is the set of ordered n -tuple (x_1, \dots, x_n) where $x_i \in A_i$ for each $i = 1, \dots, n$.
- These ordered systems are called triples for $n = 3$, quadruplets for $n = 4$ and n -tuples for n . We note it by $A_1 \times A_2 \times \dots \times A_n$ or in abbreviation $\prod_{i=1}^n A_i$.

When $A_i = A$ the product $\prod_{i=1}^n A_i$ is noted as A^n .

- like

$$A \times B \times C = \{(a, b, c), a \in A \wedge b \in B \wedge c \in C\},$$

$$A \times B \times C \times D = \{(a, b, c, d), a \in A \wedge b \in B \wedge c \in C \wedge d \in D\},$$

- $\mathbb{R}^n = \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \times \dots \times \mathbb{R}$ (n times) is the Cartesian n -space

Power Set

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There is a natural way to construct a family of sets. Take a set A . The collection of all subsets of A is called the power set of A and denoted by $\mathcal{P}(A)$.

Definition

For any set A ,

$$\mathcal{P}(A) = \{B, B \subseteq A\}$$

Examples

$$\mathcal{P}(\{1, 2, 5\}) = \{\emptyset, \{1\}, \{1, 2\}, \{1, 5\}, \{2, 5\}, \{2\}, \{5\}, A\}$$

Remark

$$|\mathcal{P}(A)| = 2^{|A|}$$

Partition of a Set

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- Let X be a set. A partition of X is a collection of disjoint subsets of X such that their union is X .
- The collection of subset A_1, A_2, \dots, A_k forms a partition of X , if and only if:

$$A_i \neq \emptyset, \forall i \in \mathbb{N}$$

$$A_1 \cup A_2 \cup \dots \cup A_k = X, \text{ and}$$

$$A_i \cap A_j = \emptyset \text{ for all } i \neq j.$$

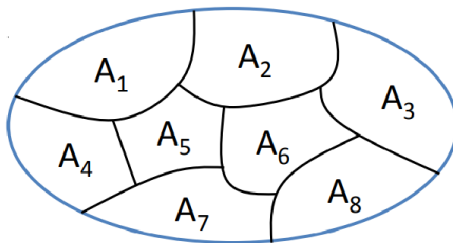


Figure: Partition of a set

Partition of a Set

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Example

Let $E = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$, if we take

$$A = \{1, \}, B = \{2, 3\}, C = \{4\}.$$

Then

$$F = \{A, B, C\}$$

is a partition of E , but

$$F' = \{\emptyset, A, B, C\}$$

it is not a partition of E .

Definitions

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- In natural language relations are a kind of links existing between objects.
Examples: 'mother of', 'neighbor of', "part of", 'is older than', 'is an ancestor of', 'is a subset of', etc.
- A relation \mathcal{R} on a set is defined by any subset Γ of $E \times E$. When $(x, y) \in \Gamma$, we say that x is related to y via \mathcal{R} , and we write $x\mathcal{R}y$. Γ is called «the graph of the relation \mathcal{R} »
- A binary relation on a set A is a subset $\mathcal{R} \subseteq A \times A$
- given $A = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$, $B = \{2, 4, 6, 8, 10\}$ and $a\mathcal{R}b \Leftrightarrow a$ is a divisor of b , then $\Gamma = \{(1, 2), (1, 4), (1, 6), (1, 8), (1, 10), (2, 2), (2, 4), (2, 6), (2, 8), (2, 10), (3, 6), (4, 4), (4, 8)\}$
is a graph of the relation \mathcal{R} .

Examples

- Let $E = \mathbb{R}$ and define the relation \mathcal{R}_1 by

$$\forall x, y \in \mathbb{R}, x \mathcal{R}_1 y \Leftrightarrow x = y.$$

The graph of \mathcal{R}_1 is :

$$\Gamma = \{(x, x), x \in \mathbb{R}\}$$

- Let $E = \mathbb{N}^*$, and define the relation \mathcal{R}_2 by

$$\forall (x, y) \in \mathbb{N}^*, x \mathcal{R}_2 y \Leftrightarrow x|y.$$

We have

$$x|y \Leftrightarrow \exists k \in \mathbb{N}^* | y = kx$$

The graphe of \mathcal{R}_2 is

$$\Gamma = \{(x, kx), x \in \mathbb{N}^*\}$$

- Let $E = \mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N}$, $(a, b) \mathcal{R}_3 (c, d) \Leftrightarrow a + d = b + c$

Properties

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Definition

Let \mathcal{R} be a relation on a the non empty set E

- We say that \mathcal{R} is reflexive if $x\mathcal{R}x$. for all $x \in E$.
- We say that \mathcal{R} is symmetric if $x\mathcal{R}y \Rightarrow y\mathcal{R}x$. for all $(x, y) \in E^2$.
- We say that \mathcal{R} is antisymmetric if $x\mathcal{R}y \wedge y\mathcal{R}x \Rightarrow x = y$ for all $(x, y) \in E^2$.
- We say that \mathcal{R} is transitive if $x\mathcal{R}y \wedge y\mathcal{R}z \Rightarrow x\mathcal{R}z$ for all $(x, y, z) \in E^3$.

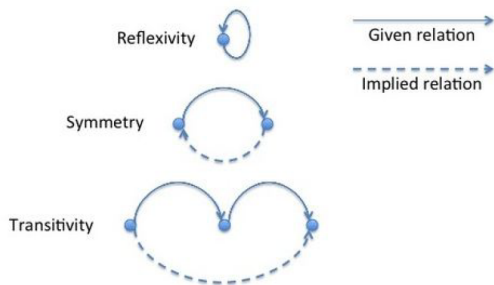


Figure: reflexive, symmetric, transitive

Properties

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Example 1

Let $X = \mathbb{Z}$, and define a relation \mathcal{R} by $x\mathcal{R}y \Leftrightarrow \gcd(x, y) = 1$. Let's consider what properties \mathcal{R} satisfies.

- Reflexivity: NO. Take $|x| > 1$, then $\gcd(x, x) = x \neq 1$, so $x\mathcal{R}x$ is almost never true.
- Symmetry: YES. Since $\gcd(x, y) = \gcd(y, x)$, we definitely have symmetry.
- Antisymmetry: NO. Obviously we can't have symmetry and antisymmetry at the same time.
- Transitivity: NO. Take $x = 10, y = 9, z = 20$. Then we have $x\mathcal{R}y$ and $y\mathcal{R}z$, but we definitely don't get $x\mathcal{R}z$.

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Example 2

Let $X = \mathbb{R}$, and define a relation \mathcal{R} by $x\mathcal{R}y \Leftrightarrow x \leq y$. Let's consider what properties \mathcal{R} satisfies.

- Reflexivity: yes. Certainly $x \leq x$ is always true.
- Symmetry: No. It doesn't make sense that $x \leq y \Rightarrow y \leq x$
- Antisymmetry: YES. If $x \leq y \wedge y \leq x$, it is standard to conclude that $x = y$.
- Transitivity: YES. If $x \leq y \wedge y \leq z$, we know that $x \leq z$.

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Example 3

Let $X = \mathbb{N}^*$, and define a relation \mathcal{R} by $x\mathcal{R}y \Leftrightarrow x|y$. Let's consider what properties \mathcal{R} satisfies. Indeed,

- Reflexivity: yes. Certainly $x|x$ is always true.
- Symmetry: No. It doesn't make sense that $x|y \Rightarrow y|x$, let $x = 2$ and $y = 4$. We have 2 divides 4, but 4 doesnot divide 2, Therefore, \mathcal{R} is not symmetric.
- Antisymmetry: YES. Indeed,

$$x|y \Leftrightarrow \exists k \in \mathbb{N}^* | y = kx$$

$$y|x \Leftrightarrow \exists k' \in \mathbb{N}^* | x = k'y$$

we have then

$$x = kk'x$$

It follows that

$$x(1 - kk') = 0$$

Since $x \neq 0$ then $1 - kk' = 0$. Now ,as k et k' are positive integers,we have

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Example 3

$$kk' = 1 = k' = 1$$

Hence

$$x = y$$

■ Transitivity: YES. If

$$x|y \Leftrightarrow \exists k_1 \in \mathbb{N}^* | y = k_1 x$$

and

$$y|z \Leftrightarrow \exists k_2 \in \mathbb{N}^* | z = k_1 y,$$

we have then

$$z = k_1 k_2 x$$

Setting $k_3 = k_1 k_2$, we have $z = k_3 x$ with $k_3 \in \mathbb{N}^*$ Therefore $x \mathcal{R} z$.

Definition

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Definition

A relation \mathcal{R} on X is called an equivalence relation if it is reflexive, symmetric, and transitive.

Example

- The equality relation \mathcal{R} is an equivalence relation.
- The divisibility relation is not an equivalence relation. (example 3)
- The relation of example 1 is not an equivalence relation.

Equivalence class

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Let \mathcal{R} be an equivalence relation on a set X , a is an item in X . Equivalence class is :

- The set of all elements that are related to an element a of X
- \bar{a} denotes the equivalence class of a with respect to \mathcal{R} .
- $\bar{a} = \{s | (a, s) \in \Gamma\}$ with Γ is graphe of \mathcal{R} .
- Consider $X = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ and its equivalence relation

$$\Gamma = \{(1, 1), (2, 2), (3, 3), (4, 4), (1, 2), (2, 1), (2, 3), (3, 2), (1, 3), (3, 1)\}$$

$$\bar{1} = \{1, 2, 3\}$$

$$\bar{2} = \{2, 1, 3\}$$

$$\bar{3} = \{3, 2, 1\}$$

$$\bar{4} = \{4\}$$

- We have

$$\bar{a} = \bar{b} \Leftrightarrow a\mathcal{R}b$$

quotient set

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Definition

Let \mathcal{R} be an equivalence relation on a non empty set E . The set of equivalence classes is called the quotient set of E modulo \mathcal{R} . It is denoted by E/\mathcal{R} .

Example

We define on the set of integers \mathbb{Z} the relation \mathcal{R} , called congruence relation modulo 3, by

$$\forall x, y \in \mathbb{Z}, x\mathcal{R}y \Leftrightarrow \exists k \in \mathbb{Z}, x - y = 3k.$$

This is an equivalence relation. There are three equivalence classes :

$$\bar{0} = \{3k; k \in \mathbb{Z}\}$$

$$\bar{1} = \{3k + 1; k \in \mathbb{Z}\}$$

$$\bar{2} = \{3k + 2; k \in \mathbb{Z}\}$$

So we have

$$E/\mathcal{R} = \mathbb{Z}/\mathcal{R} = \{\bar{0}, \bar{1}, \bar{2}\}$$

Remark In these example ,when x is related to y , we write:

$$x \equiv y [3]$$

and we read this as "**x is congruent to y modulo 3**".

Fundamental Properties

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Let \mathcal{R} be an equivalence relation on the non empty set E . Then we have :

- If $y \in \bar{x}$, then $\bar{x} = \bar{y}$
- For all $x, y \in E$, $x\mathcal{R}y \Leftrightarrow \bar{x} = \bar{y}$.
- If $u, v \in \bar{x}$, then $u\mathcal{R}v$.
- For all $x, y \in E$, we have $\bar{x} = \bar{y}$ or $\bar{x} \cap \bar{y} = \emptyset$.
- Let E be a non empty set and let \mathcal{R} be an equivalence relation on E . Then the quotient set E/\mathcal{R} forms a partition of E .
- Conversely, every partition of E defines an equivalence relation on E .

Definition

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Definition

Let E be a non empty set, and let \mathcal{R} be a relation defined on E . \mathcal{R} is said to be an order relation if it is reflexive, antisymmetric and transitive.

Example

- The equality relation \mathcal{R} is an order
- let A a set and $\mathcal{P}(A)$ \mathcal{R} is defined on $\mathcal{P}(A)$ by

$$B \mathcal{R} C \Leftrightarrow B \subseteq C$$

\mathcal{R} is an ordre relation.

- Let \mathcal{R} is defined on \mathbb{N} by

$$a \mathcal{R} b \Leftrightarrow a|b$$

is an ordre relation.

Partial And Total Order

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Definition

Let E be a non empty set. An order relation defined on E , denoted by \mathcal{R} , is said to be a total order relation if we have

$$\forall x, y, \in E, x\mathcal{R}y \vee y\mathcal{R}x$$

We then say that (E, \mathcal{R}) is a totally ordered set.

Definition

When the order is not total, we say it is partial.

Example

The usual order \leq on the set of real numbers is a total order relation, since we have

$$\forall x, y \in \mathbb{R}, x \leq y \vee y \leq x$$

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The inclusion relation \mathcal{R} defined on $\mathcal{P}(E)$ by

$$B \mathcal{R} C \Leftrightarrow B \subseteq C$$

is a partial order relation. Indeed, taking

$$E = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}, \quad A = \{3\}, \quad B = \{1, 2\}$$

we have

$$(A \not\subseteq B \wedge B \not\subseteq A).$$